

HISTORY OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

FROM THE YEAR 1893 TO 1929.

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ALBERTA.

I am going to try and give you a little history of Holy Trinity Church, starting from 1893 to 1929.

Arriving at South Edmonton on the 10th March, 1893, we found very few people and not many Anglicans. At the end of the Spring our Student, (Mr. Beal) arrived from Toronto College, and not having a church we received permission to hold our services during the summer in the little school house. The little school house stood on the corner of Whyte Avenue and the present 6th Street, just south of Dr. Green's present residence, but quite in the bush at that time.

I have a picture in my mind of that first service; of course we had to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in the school seats (according to size), and having no organ we all tried to do our best by singing lustily and loud in our response. I can assure you all it was good to hear an Anglican service once more.

During that summer we started to get busy, thinking we could manage to build a church, and marvelous it was how we really did manage to build the little church. A free light was given us by the Company which built the present C. P. Railway, then called the C. & E.

The location selected for the church was about two blocks south of Whyte Avenue and three blocks east of the present C. P. R. Station.

The little church was started, and created a great interest in myself - a church to be built of lumber and to be

painted would be wonderful. A hole was dug just about large enough to hold the small furnace, so you can all draw your own conclusion as to what the foundation would be like. A great amount of the work was given free, not only by our own church men but by outsiders as well.

When the church was well under way our Bishop from Calgary (the late Bishop Pinkham) came up to give us a service and look into things in general. Having no church, and we could not think of our Bishop holding service in the school house, we borrowed a church, the only one in the village at that time being the little Methodist church, standing where the present Metropolitan church now stands. An Altar was fixed up for the occasion, and all denominations came to take part in the service so it did not take long to fill the church.

During the Bishop's visit with us he held a business meeting of the wardens and vestry, which was practically all the men of the congregation. When my husband was leaving for the meeting that evening I remarked that our church would have to have a name, suggesting "Holy Trinity", this being the name of the church I attended near London, Ontario, where I was baptized and later married. This name was favored by the Bishop and meeting, so was accepted.

As nearly as I can remember the church was ready for us to use before cold weather, with nothing in it, but it did not take long before an Altar and kneeling stools were made out of packing boxes, the best we could procure for coverings being red canton flannel.

The seats were plain boards, supported at each end with a chair, and the collection plates were two modest sized tin pie plates. How fortunate we were to have a very nice organ loaned to us by the late Mr. Satche, until we would be in a position to purchase one for the church, which was not for several years.

All Saints church of Edmonton had a new Rector by this time (Mr. Stunden) and it was arranged by both parishes for him to give us a service every Sunday at three P. M.

The ladies of Holy Trinity parish arranged for their first entertainment that winter in the form of a concert. We had to use a hall which was not finished, but we all worked merrily along, getting the shavings, etc. swept out. Our concert was a great success, Edmonton people coming over helping to swell the proceeds for our new church debt.

By this time some of our married people, as well as bachelors, had written to their friends in the Old Country and were receiving nice little donations in money for the church. Not being self supporting we were able to get a grant from the fund for that purpose.

In the year 1895 our very first Minister came to us, the Rev. Henry Allan Gray (our present Bishop) and his Mother, who was most kind in many ways, always ready to open her home to the lonely bachelor, also playing the organ when necessary.

During the Rector's time with us we were able to

get seats with kneeling stools, a reading desk, pulpit, and two chairs for the Altar, one of the chairs still being in use in the present church. These were all made by carpenters in the village, and I think in nearly every case donated.

The nice cross on our present Altar was donated by some of our young men, a thank offering for their safe return from the Boer War. Our two small vases were donated by Miss Hawkins, who at that time was visiting her two brothers. Our first real pair of collection plates were donated by the late Dr. Baldwin, in memory of his Mother, late of Toronto. The pretty window we face in our new church was also donated by the late Mrs. Tranter, in memory of her Mother, this window having to be stored and insured until our new church was built. I mention these especially for they are now in our present church.

How sorry we all were when our beloved Rector and his dear Mother had to leave in April, 1897, the Rector leaving to take charge of All Saints Parish. I might mention that by this time our congregation had increased, more people moving into the parish, also more talent.

I often think of the organ being played Sunday after Sunday by one of our parish members, who had twenty miles to drive, her home being near Cocking Lake; bad roads made no difference, what matter if her horse did get stuck in the mud, she was at her post just the same, and is still going strong - our Diocesan President.

In 1897 the Rev. Mr. Burns took charge of this parish, being with us until 1900.

When the Rev. Mr. Burns left we had a supply from Calgary, the Rev. Mr. Webb. He mentioned to the wardens that he felt sure his brother, the Rev. Mr. George Webb of Ontario, would come to us if he received a call. A call was given and accepted in 1900. Not long after his arrival and getting settled we had to get busy, our Rector feeling the church was not in a good location. It was then decided to move the church, and an exchange of lots was made for the present site. The church was moved and was none the worse for the moving, and I might mention that this same church stood moving in all four times, the last move being to where the St. John's Church now stands and holds service.

Soon a Rectory had to be built, which meant buying more property. We bought where the Rectory now stands and the Rev. Mr. Webb sent for a copy of the plans of the Rectory in which he had lived in the last.

On Thanksgiving night we held a very successful Thanksgiving supper in a hall over the present Backus Feed Store, selling sewing and candy also. The crowd was so great that the proprietor of the hall had to open a door into an adjoining hall in order to accommodate the people. The proceeds from this supper were applied on the debt on the new Rectory. Therefore our Thanksgiving Suppers date back to that event and never since has one single Thanksgiving night passed that Holy Trinity church has not held its Thanksgiving supper, and for many years the proceeds applied on the debt on the Rectory.

In the summer of 1904 the Rev. Mr. Webb left going to Maple Creek, and later received a call to All Saints Parish, the Rev. Henry Allan Gray having been appointed our Bishop.

In the summer of 1905 we gave a call to the Rev. Mr. George. By this time our little church was getting too small for us and at times did not begin to hold all our people, so it was decided to build a new church. Plans were drawn up for the new church and everything did look bright. We moved into the old Knox Church, north of the present Knox Church, to hold service, our little old church being moved east of the present church, and the excavating started. Through no fault of Holy Trinity parish all the work had to be stopped and the basement covered over. A financial depression had struck all Canada and the money market was in such a condition that it was impossible to get a loan. The seats for the new church, however, had been ordered to come with the Knox and Baptist Church seats, in order to save freight.

Our ladies' organization was now even more active than in past years, new members coming into the parish making the work easier.

Now I must give you a little of the history of the seats - the new seats that were in storage at this time. It was the ladies' organization that took care of the paying - we seemed to have prospered even though we were going through such hard times. We held monthly socials very often in the Orange Hall, as well as in private homes, and these were well patronized. We were able to finish paying for the seats in a very short time.

in fact before we had a place to put them, but it was not long before we were able to use the new seats.

1906 saw us comfortable in our new basement and I well remember our first Sunday there; we had to walk down steps from outside in order to get into the basement, and I feel sure we all were very happy that Sunday morning.

The time had then arrived when we were called upon to say goodbye to our esteemed Rector and his wife, the Rev. Mr. & Mrs. George.

The latter part of the summer of 1910 the Rev. Mr. Jones of Taber took charge and was only with us until November; his work in this life being finished he was called to his eternal home.

In 1911 and 1912 the Rev. Mr. Lynds was our Rector, coming from the Lower Province, but Mrs. Lynds not enjoying good health they decided to return East.

In February, 1912, a call was given to the Rev. Mr. Carruthers, and soon after his arrival, on looking over his new field, he saw work ahead of him, in that we soon would have to try and get out of the basement and finish our church.

In the Spring of 1913 a loan was arranged for and the work started on the church. Our place to hold service this time being in the South Side Armouries, where we remained until we moved into our new church in the Fall.

The opening of our new church was an event long to be remembered, the late Bishop Pinkham coming from Calgary to help take part in the service, and Holy Trinity Bell ringing for



the first time. The seats looked better than ever, having the new church to show them off. The Choir made their first appearance in their new surplices, not forgetting the caretaker in his new gown. All our new furnishings, which had been donated, were used for the first time that morning, our carpet being a donation from the late Mrs. Sache.

Holy Trinity has a member who has been very kind in the past, as well as the present, helping in a very liberal way financially and always wishing it to be kept quiet.

In the Fall of 1916 our Rector, Canon Carruthers, left for overseas, being Chaplain to the 151st Battalion.

Conditions did not look very bright for our church, with the big mortgage, and the interest would have to be paid some way or other. However, the W. A. worked and I wonder now how the money was made, for we all realized the call for war work had to be thought of and provided for as well. I am thankful to be able to say we did come out on the right side, and were able to keep our church door from being closed, and whoever of the W. A. were privileged to attend the annual business meeting heard from our wardens and vestry loud praise of the wonderful support we had given them financially.

The war was over and our Rector and wife and family once more settled in the Rectory.

It was not long before we again plunged, this time buying a new organ. At the annual business meeting the subject of buying an organ was discussed, some for and some decidedly

against it; the thought of several more thousand dollars debt did not look very encouraging. However, with private subscriptions being promised it was decided to buy the organ, and it was installed and ready for the first Sunday in July. It was not long before the parish Guild was organized and pledged themselves to pay for the organ, and I have heard recently that it will soon be all paid for.

In April, 1927, our Rector, Canon Carruthers, accepted a call to Holy Trinity Church, Jinnipeg, having been with us for fifteen years.

In June, 1927, we had the pleasure of welcoming the Rev. Mr. & Mrs. Reynolds and family to our parish.

Much good work and progress has been made in a very short time by our Rector and his esteemed wife, through our Rector's good business head and guiding hand, and I trust and hope the time is not far away before we will all have the pleasure of seeing the present mortgage go up in smoke.

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